जैसा कि पहले बताया गया है यह राज्य सरकारों का दायित्व है कि वे प्राकृतिक आपदाओं से प्रभावित लोगों को राहत प्रदान करे और ऐसी घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति रोकने के लिए उपयुक्त उपाय करें। केन्द्र सरकार समय-समय पर नियुक्त वित्त आयोगों की सिफारिशों के आधार पर अतिरिक्त संसाधन प्रदान करके राज्य सरकारों के प्रयासों में केवल सहायता देती है।

यहां यह भी उल्लेख किया जाता है कि आन्ध्र प्रदेश के संबंध में एक अन्तर-मंत्रालयी केन्द्रीय दल, प्रौद्योगिकविदों/वैज्ञानिकों की एक उच्च स्तरीय समिति और किसानों की ऋणग्रस्तता से उत्पन्न विपत्ति की जांच के लिए एक अध्ययन दल ने एकीकृत कीट प्रबन्ध प्रणालियों, किसानों के लिए जागरूकता कार्यक्रम, फसल प्रतिमान, कीटनाशकों के प्रयोग, जनशक्ति के प्रशिक्षण आदि से संबंधित कई सिफारिशें की हैं ताकि भविष्य में ऐसी घटनाओं को रोका जा सके। इन सिफारिशों पर अनुवर्ती कार्रवाई की जा रही है।

Tragedy during the recent Haj Yatra

*32. SHRI GOVINDRAO ADIK: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sought a comprehensive report on the reported tragedy during the recent Haj Yatra involving lives of one hundred and odd persons including 31 Indians;

(b) whether such tragedies have been a recurrent phenomena;

(c) if so, the details of tragedies that took heavy toll of human lives during the last one decade;

(d) the details of steps proposed to be taken for avoiding foreseen tragedies in future through better management of crowds in future; and

(e) the suggestions sent from India to the Organisers of the Committee?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI VASUNDHRA RAJE): (a) Yes, Sir. Reports on the stampede which took place in Mina on 9th April, 1998, in which 32 Indian pilgrims died, have been received from our Embassy in Riyadh and the Consulate General, Jeddah.

(b) to (c) Details of tragedies that occurred during Haj in the last one decade:

(i) *July 2, 1990:* 1,426 pilgrims were killed in a stampede in the *Al Muaisscm* Tunnel, of whom 11 were Indians.

(ii) *May 23, 1994:* A stampede occurred at Mina killing 270 pilgrims, including 31 Indians.

(iii) *April 15, 1997:* The tents accommodating Hajis at Mina caught fire killing about 350 pilgrims, of whom 184 were Indians.

(iv) *April 9, 1998:* A stampede occurred at Mina killing 114 pilgrims, including 32 Indians.

The Saudi Government, which is primarily concerned with the security and welfare of the pilgrims, has made strenuous efforts to improve Haj arrangements every year. The entire Jamaraat area was greatly expanded following the tragedy in 1994 in which 270 pilgrims had been killed. The width of the Jamaraat bridge had also been increased to 85 meters, and two outlets from the bridge, each with a width of 4 meters, were constructed.

Indian Haj officials as well as members of the Indian Haj Goodwill delegation have been discussing arrangements at the Jamaraat with the Saudi Haj authorities. It is the view of the Saudi authorities, with which Government concurs, that, given the very large number of pilgrims performing the ritual of the stoning at the same time, mere expansion of existing facilities may not be the answer: the pilgrims have to be trained to adopt more effective' measures to avoid stampedes. Government has decided that the training and orientation programmes that will be implemented for Haj '99 shall include detailed advice to pilgrims about safety measures, both to prevent stampedes and to avoid getting caught in them.